



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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November 13, 2009

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich
Maria Oms
FOR

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – PHOENIX
HOUSE OF LOS ANGELES – PHOENIX ACADEMY GROUP HOME**

We have completed a review of Phoenix Academy Group Home (Group Home or Agency) operated by Phoenix House of Los Angeles. The Group Home contracts with the Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Probation.

Phoenix Academy Group Home is a 140-bed facility, which provides care for children ages 11-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring review, the Group Home was providing services for fifty-three Probation children, forty-five privately placed children and three DCFS children.

Phoenix Academy Group Home is located in the Third District.

Scope of Review

The purpose of our review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. In addition, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues and includes an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, employee records, a facility inspection and interviews with children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with children are designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

Summary of Findings

Generally, the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. However, the Agency needs to address a few deficient areas. Specifically, the Group Home needs to include input from all members of the treatment team in the development and implementation of the Needs and Services Plans and teach all children daily living, self-help and survival skills. The Group Home also needs to provide all children with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs and with sufficient recreational activities. In addition, the Group Home needs to provide all children with sufficient portions of food and snacks and encourage and assist all children in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Attached is a detailed report of the review.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Agency's management and DCFS. In response to the recommendations made in the report, the Group Home management completed a corrective action plan (attached) which we approved. We thank DCFS and Agency management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Don Chadwick at (213) 253-0301.

WLW:MMO:JET:DC:AA:asl

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, DCFS
Ted Myers, Chief Deputy Director, DCFS
Susan Kerr, Senior Deputy Director, DCFS
Robert B. Taylor, Chief Probation Officer
Gary LeMel, Board President, Phoenix House of Los Angeles
Elizabeth Salazar, Executive Director, Phoenix House of Los Angeles
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**Phoenix House of Los Angeles
Phoenix Academy Group Home
Lakeview Terrace, California 91342
License Number: 191222731
Rate Classification Level: 12**

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Phoenix Academy Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean and adequately landscaped.

The interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat and clean, there is adequate furniture and lighting, and the Group Home provides a home-like environment.

Children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are clean, orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable, the beds all have a full complement of linens, and the children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate.

The Group Home maintains age-appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, TVs and DVD players. Books and resource materials, including computers with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

Recommendation

None.

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Fifteen

Comments:

The children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement and are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement. Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current, comprehensive and include short and long term goals. However, all members of the treatment team are not included in the development and implementation of the NSPs.

Recommendation

- 1. Phoenix House of Los Angeles management include input from all members of the treatment team in the development and implementation of the Needs and Services Plans.**

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Fifteen

Comments:

Children are attending school, are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs and are progressing satisfactorily in school. However, not all children are taught daily living, self-help and survival skills. In addition, not all children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Recommendations

- 2. Phoenix House of Los Angeles management:**
 - a. Teach all children daily living, self-help and survival skills.**
 - b. Provide all children with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.**

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Fifteen

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities and participate in extra-curricular enrichment and social activities in which they have an interest. While the Group Home provides transportation to and from recreational activities, the Group Home does not provide all children with sufficient recreational activities.

Recommendation

- 3. Phoenix House of Los Angeles management provide all children with sufficient recreational activities.**

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Comments:

Children have current court authorizations for psychotropic medication. Documentation confirms that children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

Children are informed about their psychotropic medication and are aware of their right to refuse medication. Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

Recommendation

None.

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment – Interviews with children

Sample size: Fifteen

Comments:

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, have private visitors and attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children receive voluntary medical, dental and psychiatric care. However, two of the children are not satisfied with the amount of food portions available during meal times and the quantity of snacks.

Recommendation

- 4. Phoenix House of Los Angeles management provide all children with sufficient portions of food and snacks.**

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Fifteen

Comments:

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes and the clothing provided is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance and children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. However, not all of the children are encouraged or assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendation

- 5. Phoenix House of Los Angeles management encourage and assist all children in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.**

VIII. Personnel Background Checks

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Sample size: 105

Comments:

The Group Home has obtained the required criminal and child abuse clearances for their employees.

Recommendation

None.

11600 Eldridge Avenue, Lake View Terrace, CA 91342/ (818) 686-3000/ www.phoenixhouse.org

Phoenix Academy

May 1, 2009

County of Los Angeles Depart of Auditor-Controller
Children's Group Home Ombudsman Division
Attn: Alex Sigal-Liberman
350 S. Figueroa Street, 8th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90071

Dear Ms. Sigal-Liberman

Enclosed you will find Phoenix House's CAP in response to the County of Los Angeles Depart of Auditor-Controller recent annual group home performance review. The packet begins with a response to each item needing a CAP. After the initial response there is relevant supporting documentation. Please contact me with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Oren W. Siegel".

Oren W. Siegel, M.A.
Administrative Director

11600 Eldridge Avenue, Lake View Terrace, CA 91342/ (818) 686-3000/ www.phoenixhouse.org

Phoenix Academy

Program Services

Recommendation

1. Phoenix Academy Lakeview Terrace Group Home management includes input from all members of the treatment team in the development and implementation of the needs and services plans.

Corrective Action Plan:

1. It is the Case Manager's responsibility to ensure that all signatures and input from all key members are included in the NSP. This is our standing policy. However, monthly monitoring takes place for the specific evaluation of member input.

Manager implementation: March 1, 2009

Quality Review: Monthly by Quality Assurance Coordinator

Educational and Emancipation Services

Recommendations

1. Phoenix Academy Lakeview Terrace management:
 - a. Teach all children daily living, self-help and survival skills
 - b. Provide all children with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Corrective Action Plan:

1. a. It is the Case Manager who is responsible to track whether a resident obtains ILP services. This is our standing policy. However, monthly monitoring takes place for the specific evaluation of ILP services.

Manager implementation: March 1, 2009

Quality Review: Monthly by Quality Assurance Coordinator

For those residents not eligible for ILP services, Phoenix Academy does provide in house Life Skill Classes through a Community Services Block Grant; thus far in this service ninety residents have taken the classes.

Manager implementation: July 1, 2008

Quality Review: Monthly by Sr. Voc Ed Counselor

- b. All case managers are responsible for completion of the Emancipation Preparation Contract along with the resident. The timeline for completion and review will follow the NSP timeline. Review of and filling out of the form will begin within two weeks of entering treatment. The contract will

be completed within sixty (60) days of entering treatment and reviewed quarterly thereafter. The Policy and Procedure is included with this CAP.

Manager implementation: May 1, 2009

Quality Review: Monthly by Quality Assurance Coordinator

Recreation and Activities

Recommendation

3. Phoenix Academy Lakeview Terrace management provides all children with sufficient recreational activities.

Corrective Action Plan:

3. It is the policy of Phoenix Academy to provide residents with adequate recreational activities. Data on this activity is tracked monthly. Included with this CAP is data for October, November and December 2008.

Manager implementation: 2005

Quality Review: Monthly by Unit Clinical Specialists

Personal Rights

Recommendation

4. Phoenix Academy Lakeview Terrace management provides all children with sufficient food portions.

Corrective Action Plan:

4. Phoenix Academy takes every effort to ensure that residents are given the appropriate portion of food. The only time a residents portions will be above or below the residents' standard portions is due to a Doctor's order. The form used for a Doctor's recommendation is at the end of this CAP. The kitchen complies with USDA guidelines, the FDA Food Code, the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs.

In addition, Food Surveys are conducted routinely to ensure the food and the food service is to the resident's satisfaction. Copies of recent Food Surveys are included in this CAP. Phoenix Academy also makes special accommodations for residents who have religious diet needs, vegetarian or vegan diet needs and allergy diet needs. At the end of the corrective action plan is a copy of the policy and procedure for this.

Manager implementation: January 1, 2006

Quality Review: Monthly by Foodservices Manager

Clothing and Allowance:

5. Phoenix Academy Lakeview Terrace management encourages and assists children in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Corrective Action Plan:

5. Effective March 1, 2009 the Life Book policy and procedure was completely implemented. The policy and procedure is at the end of this corrective action plan.

Manager implementation: March 1, 2009

Quality Review: Monthly by Quality Assurance Coordinator

Adolescent Services – Phoenix House, LVT
Policy and Procedure Manual
Developed: May 11, 2009

pages: 1 of 1

Policy:

The Emancipation Contract is a crucial document in assisting our residents gain perspective and focus on their short and long term future. Phoenix Academy is committed to the use of this tool.

Procedures:

- The Case Manager will along with a resident develop a formalized emancipation contract within the first 60 days in treatment. The Emancipation Contract needs to be 100% complete at 60 days in treatment.
- The Emancipation Contract must be in the chart accept when it is being updated. The document must be filed even it is only partially complete up to the 60 days.
- The review timeline for the Emancipation Contract after sixty days will coincide with the NSP Timeline. Evaluation of the resident's emancipation contract /treatment plan of progress at regular intervals every 90 days.
- The Case Manager needs to assist residents in completing the emancipation contract in an individual meeting on a weekly basis.
- The Case Manager will assist and teach residents on how to set short-term goals, long-term goals and objectives appropriate for the resident's development as it relates to his/her Emancipation Contract.
- The case Manager will communicate with and work with the Voc. Ed./School staff in order to meet the educational needs of the resident in accordance with the Emancipation Contract.
- The Case Manager will communicate about the details of a resident's Emancipation Contract at the monthly case conference.

Attachment: Emancipation Contract Form